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SUBJECT: IRAN PRESS/NUCLEAR: INITIAL IRAN PRESS REACTION TO GENEVA
IAEA DISCUSSIONS

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¶1. (SBU) The following is a sampling of October 22 Iranian press coverage of the October 19-21 Vienna talks. Initial reporting was mostly factual, and coverage uniformly relayed the basic points of the draft agreement, in addition to IAEA Director General al-Baradei's post-negotiation comments. Conservative press highlighted that no final decision had been reached, "nothing had been signed," and that there was no 'Friday deadline' agreed to by the parties. It also highlighted Iran's 'principled stance' towards France which caused the French to apologize for past behavior and promise to reform its ways. Reformist press also mentioned October 20 meetings between the US and Iranian delegations in IAEA Director General Al-Baradei's office. The only official to speak out against the draft agreement was Deputy Majlis Speaker Bahonar, who said that providing 3.5 percent enriched fuel in exchange for receiving 20 percent fuel was "unacceptable."

¶2. (U) Kayhan (conservative): "Vienna Negotiations End without Finalizing of Any Type of Agreement"

- Diplomats in Tehran say after three days of negotiations, the IAEA Director General distributed a draft agreement with decisions concerning it deferred to the future, with the Iranian negotiating team and the Russian and American delegations having moved the final decision to their capitals.

- Contrary to Western press, no agreement concerning it has been reached.

- Based on the latest reports from Vienna, Russia and the US have said that the sides have until Friday to announce their final opinion on the draft. However, informed officials in Tehran do not confirm any deadline concerning the agreement on the draft and are convinced that this [i.e. the Friday deadline] was Al-Baradei expressing his personal opinion.

- Based on this report, Russia, France and the US requested Iran to implement an agreement whereby by the end of the year Tehran would provide 1200 kilograms of its own uranium to Russia, which

would later be sent to France.

- Al-Baradei didn't say whether Iran had agreed to this key point or not. IRIG IAEA Representative Ali Asghar Soltanieh said only that Iran will be in a position to receive the fuel it needs for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR), adding that "all details will be revealed on Friday."

- Talks in Vienna stopped on Tuesday as a result of Iran's opposition of French presence at these negotiations and the statement of IRIG FM Mottaki that Iran saw no need for France's involvement in the provision of its fuel. But after Iran, accompanied by Russia and the US, had a one-hour meeting with Al-Baradei in his office to discuss the contents of the negotiations.

- Sources close to Vienna say that France distanced itself from its former behavior and its unwillingness to act according to its former nuclear obligations with respect to Iran, and announced its commitment to correct its past behavior and its commitment to its new obligations.

- An informed source close to the Vienna negotiations emphasized "With this act France is seeking to correct its past behavior and reform its record of nuclear interaction with Iran so that as a consequence Iran will accept Paris as one of the sides of the agreement to provide TRR fuel."

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- Iranian officials in Vienna announced their opposition to the presence of France in the fuel deal due to its lack of commitment to its obligations, to include providing 50 tons of UF6 gas to Iran. In this regard, IAEA officials say that based on the proposed agreement Russia will enrich the uranium to the necessary levels and France will have a secondary and indirect role. Iran's IAEA representative said that at the end of the talks Russia was designated as responsible for implementing the full agreement for providing TRR fuel.

13. (U) Majlis Deputy Speaker Mohammad Reza Bahonar: "Exchanging 3.5 percent fuel for 20 percent fuel isn't acceptable to us."

In a press conference Majlis Deputy Speaker Bahonar was asked about the just concluded Vienna talks, to which he replied:

- The issue relates to the Tehran Nuclear Reactor which we have had for a long time and which needs 20 percent enriched fuel. The IAEA is responsible for providing this fuel, which is about to expire, to us. The AEOI has written a letter to the IAEA in this regard to provide this fuel and the IAEA has referred the matter to Russia and the US. IAEA members are responsible to provide this fuel.

-They proposed in the negotiations to give 20 percent fuel in exchange for receiving 3.5 percent enriched fuel from us, which is not part of the IAEA agreements. Our official position is that they must provide this fuel and we have announced that if the international community won't carry this out, we'll provide the fuel ourselves and this is part of our firm rights.

- Now the matter under discussion is that they are saying to us give us 3.5 percent fuel so that we give you 20 percent fuel which is not acceptable to us, and the Islamic Republic [Majlis] Representatives are busy discussing [this issue] to arrive at a conclusion.

¶4. (U) Tabnak: (Conservative/Moderate, affiliated with Expediency Council Secretary Mohsen Rezai)

- Informed sources in Tehran have said that the Vienna discussion ended .. with the Western side, despite several modifications of its positions, being unable to finalize any agreement with Iran.

- Immediately after the negotiations' end, Western media announced Iran's "agreement" to the draft proposal, but informed Tehran sources say no agreement took place and Al-Baradei just presented the draft agreement to those present.

- This source says that, "in the Vienna talks Iran was successful to get rid of France as one side of the arrangement with Iran, despite one day of resistance by the Western sides in Vienna. But finally they were forced to realize that there would be no agreement with the presence of France.

- It is noteworthy that foreign press has quoted Al-Baradei as announcing a Friday deadline for the parties to announce their views on the draft agreement. Concerning this, informed officials in Tehran have said that his statement is inconsistent with the content of the discussions and was his own personal opinion.

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- Based on reports received, in a meeting IRIG IAEA representative had with "Daniel Poneman" [sic], a US representative, a general plan was put forward for providing safety equipment for the Tehran Research Reactor main control room, and some other equipment.
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